

## Highway 212 Safety Project Focuses on Vision Zero



*MDT Director Mike Tooley emphasizes the Vision Zero message—zero death and injury on Montana roads, with the Rockvale-Laurel safety reconstruction project in the background.*

**M**DT held a very successful media event recently to highlight safety improvements on the Rockvale-Laurel reconstruction project and kickoff the Drive Sober or

Get Pulled Over enforcement campaign for the Labor Day holiday.

The event was held near Laurel on Highway 212. Director Tooley discussed the many safety improvements being made on the route. Two years ago, reconstruction of the highway began with rebuilding a railroad underpass and substandard two-lane highway into the current overpass structure with two two-lane bridges spanning the railroad. Eleven miles south, MDT is nearing completion of the Highway 212/Highway 310 intersection at Rockvale, which handles traffic from Bridger, Montana, and Cody and Lovell,

Wyoming, as well as traffic to and from Red Lodge and Yellowstone National Park. A ten-mile stretch of the reconstruction is slated to begin next spring on a new alignment between Rockvale and Laurel.

Director Tooley stated that, "Everyday we go to work to make our roads safer and this project and all our engineering projects are part of MDT's Vision Zero initiative – our goal is to eliminate death and injury on Montana roads, but it takes more than engineering and roadway maintenance to get the job done. Reaching Vision Zero is a collaborative effort among the many people who are here today." To prevent highway fatalities and injuries, Vision Zero focuses on four areas: education, enforcement, engineering and emergency medical response.

Representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, Montana Highway Patrol, Yellowstone and Carbon county sheriffs' offices, Billings and Laurel police departments, Laurel Ambulance, Billings American Medical Response, and the Montana Legion White Cross Highway Fatality Marker Program all attended the event to show the collaborative effort underway to reach Vision Zero.



## Speed Limit Changes—New Signs Ready to Install

**T**his May, a bill was signed into law that allows a speed limit change on Montana Interstates from 75 miles per hour (mph) to 80 mph. This change is consistent with surrounding states such as Wyoming, Idaho, and South Dakota, and will become effective October 1, 2015.

An important note is that not all sections of the interstate will increase to 80 mph. Interstates going through cities with a population greater than 50,000 will remain at 65 mph. Also, the new law allows for some areas of the interstate that are not suitable for



the increased speed limit to be set at a lower limit, such as mountain passes and canyons. Until MDT conducts engineering studies in these areas to set the speed limit and changes are approved by the Transportation Commission, those sections will remain at the current speed limit.

On October 1, MDT maintenance personnel will install over 350 new signs. Although the speed limit has increased, MDT asks drivers to use caution when driving, stay alert, be aware of changing road conditions due to weather, and drive at an appropriate speed for conditions.

## Surface Transportation Program Funding Status Update



**O**n July 30, Congress passed the third short-term surface transportation program extension since MAP-21 expired in September 2014. The latest extension carries forward the MAP-21 program structure, and provides the states funding through Oct 29, 2015. Though only three months of funding, this latest extension was preceded by considerable action in the Senate to develop and pass a multi-year authorization bill, the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act, which also passed the full Senate on July 30. The DRIVE Act generally perpetuates the MAP-21 program structure, with the addition of a formula freight program, and paves the way for the House to take up long-term program discussions.

MDT staff is evaluating the provisions of the DRIVE Act, and continues to support and applaud our congressional delegation's efforts to protect Montana's program funding and promote rural state transportation needs.

## Bridge Project Honored with National Award



*Deep Creek Canyon Weekend Bridge Replacement project won Best Use of Innovation category for WASHTO region and was named one of the top 10 projects in the nation.*

An MDT bridge replacement project received honors in the 2015 America's Transportation Awards competition. The project, "Deep Creek Canyon Weekend Bridge Replacement", won in the Best Use of Innovation category for the Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (WASHTO) region and was named one of the top 10 projects in the nation.

MDT along with Morrison-Maierle, Inc., Dick Anderson Construction, and Helena Sand & Gravel worked diligently to replace three bridges under challenging circumstances.

Three bridges in Deep Creek Canyon on Montana's U.S. Highway 12 needed replacement after being damaged in 2011 spring flooding. Constructing temporary detours for travelers in the narrow canyon would pose safety hazards to workers and motorists, would cause significant environmental impacts, and double the project cost. Closing the road would result in a 150-mile detour for up to nine months.

Looking beyond traditional bridge construction, innovative design and meticulous planning allowed for each old bridge to be removed and the new bridge constructed over the span of a weekend. The highway was scheduled to be closed starting on a Friday at 6 p.m. and ending the following Monday at 7 a.m. for each bridge.

The first bridge replacement was completed six hours prior to the Monday morning deadline. The second two bridges were each completed nearly 16 hours prior to deadline. What initially looked like a nine-month project with major inconveniences to travelers was accomplished with three weekend road closures.

A time lapse video is on MDT's website at [www.mdt.mt.gov/homepage/articles/deep-creek-canyon-award.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/homepage/articles/deep-creek-canyon-award.shtml).

The America's Transportation Awards – co-sponsored by AASHTO, AAA and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce – annually recognizes the best of America's transportation projects in four regional competitions. The 10 regional winners with the highest overall scores compete for the national awards.

## \$2.4 Million for Capital Transit Investments

MDT is investing \$2.4 million for local and intercity transit equipment and infrastructure. Vehicles ranging from 5-passenger vans to a 49-passenger bus will be added to or replace fleets around the state. Passenger shelters will be built across the state with a bus barn slated in Whitehall. Twenty-seven communities and two intercity providers will benefit from these capital investments. Funding is awarded through a competitive process.

MDT emphasizes a coordinated process that encourages agencies in Montana communities to work together to pool transit resources to better serve their communities.

For more information, contact David Jacobs at 444-9192 or [dajacobs@mt.gov](mailto:dajacobs@mt.gov).

## New Rest Area At Flowing Wells



*New Flowing Wells rest area at Montana Highway 200 and Montana Highway 24 intersection.*

Over the past several years, MDT has received public comment for improved state-maintained rest areas across Montana. In response, MDT is prioritizing rest area reconstruction and rehabilitation to serve the safety needs of travelers. The most recently completed rest area is Flowing Wells at the intersection of Montana Highway 200 and Montana Highway 24. Originally constructed in 1972 with a minor rehabilitation completed in 1989, the 2014 site reconstruction replaced the old facility, expanded parking, added lighting, and includes a new pet area. It opened to the public in January 2015.

Jackson Contracting Group, HGFA Architects and their team of design-build professionals helped make the new Flowing Wells rest area a success. Duane Tihista, MDT's project manager, coordinated construction of the new rest area.

To review public opinion of the Flowing Wells rest area, MDT staff conducted an on-site survey July 8, 2015. The surveys provide travelers an opportunity to "grade" the rest area and offer MDT feedback on the new facility design, services and amenities offered, and discuss how the spacing of this rest area fits within their trip purpose and distance. Information gathered here will be considered in future rest area design and investment.

Overall, travelers rated this facility excellent with 98 percent of respondents rating it an A or B. One hundred percent of travelers felt they were safe and secure using the new facility. This facility and the survey results demonstrate MDT is delivering what people need from the rest area program.

## Montana Essential Freight Rail Loan Applications

MDT will be soliciting loan applications for the Montana Essential Freight Rail Loan Program beginning in September. For more information, go to [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants\\_rail.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_rail.shtml).



# Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program



MDT's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program encourages and supports participation of companies owned and controlled by socially and economically

disadvantaged individuals to participate in transportation contracts. It is a federally funded program administered by MDT. To participate in federally funded contracts under the DBE Program, companies must be certified through the MDT DBE Program. MDT is the only DBE certifying agent in Montana.

Certification gives groups that have historically been under-represented in the contracting industry a chance to participate on federally assisted projects. Whether doing business with MDT transit agencies, airports, cities or counties, being a certified DBE may provide greater opportunity for business. Minority- or women-owned small businesses may qualify. MDT offers several services to assist DBEs in developing and growing their business including:

**Training**—DBE certified firms are eligible for year-round training. Topics are based on interest expressed through annual surveys of all DBEs. Topics cover relevant subjects such as bonding and the use of social media to bolster business.

**Directory**—Businesses are listed in the MDT Internet DBE Directory.

**Reimbursements**—In-state, highway-related DBEs are eligible for funds that can be used for training, licenses, or other expenses related to further development of the business.

**Quote Request**—The DBE Quote Request system enables contractors to directly solicit bids for a specific project from certified MDT DBE firms. Prime contractors will solicit work from DBEs, and the DBE-certified businesses have the ability to bid on each project. Projects can be highway related or non-highway related.

One component of the DBE Program is conducting an Availability/Disparity Study. MDT initiated the study in February 2015 and is scheduled to be finished in the spring of 2016.

The study will look at the availability of firms compared to their utilization in construction and small business industries and will provide recommendations to improve MDT's contracting process and operation of the DBE Program. For more information, visit: [www.mdt.mt.gov/disparitystudy](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/disparitystudy).

Several methods are being used to determine the availability of firms, including a survey and in-depth interviews with trade associations and business owners. Stakeholders and business owners can provide input via e-mail to [mdtdisparitystudy@keenindependent.com](mailto:mdtdisparitystudy@keenindependent.com), by phone at 333-1690, or [www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment\\_form.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml).

For more information, a listing of currently certified DBE businesses, and more, visit: [www.mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/civil/dbe.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/business/contracting/civil/dbe.shtml), phone (800)883-5811 or e-mail [mdtdbepro-gram@mt.gov](mailto:mdtdbepro-gram@mt.gov).



# Improved Air Quality Using MACI Equipment

Ten Montana cities and counties will be breathing a little easier with help from MDT. The department provides assistance to local governments through the Montana Air & Congestion Initiative (MACI) with funds from the Federal Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program. The program is aimed at improving air quality through the use of advanced street maintenance equipment.

Cities and counties that are eligible for the MACI equipment purchase program include those in nonattainment of federal air quality standards for fine dust/particulate matter or identified as "at-risk" of experiencing air quality readings that violate the standards monitored by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Street maintenance equipment includes street sweepers, flush trucks, and select deicing equipment. The local government match for the program is 13.42 percent with MDT providing the remaining balance through federal funds.

The 2015 equipment purchase includes \$2.9 million worth of equipment, including 11 sweepers, 4 flush trucks, and 1 combo unit.

For more information, contact Meghan Larsen at 444-6121 or [mlarsen@mt.gov](mailto:mlarsen@mt.gov).

## Save the Dates!

### Montana Highway Commission Meetings

2701 Prospect Avenue, Helena

September 24—8:30 am

October 29—1:00 pm

Contact Lori Ryan at 444-6821 or [lryan@mt.gov](mailto:lryan@mt.gov)

### Transit Management Workshop

2701 Prospect Avenue, Helena

MDT Auditorium, Helena

September 30—October 1

Contact David Jacobs at 444-9192 or [dajacobs@mt.gov](mailto:dajacobs@mt.gov)

### Annual Transportation Safety Planning Meeting

Gateway Center, 1710 National Avenue, Helena

October 28—Safety Grant Program Management Workshop

Recipients of NHTSA grants and anyone interested in this funding should attend to discuss the program, grant criteria, and reporting procedures.

October 29—Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan

This event brings safety stakeholders together annually to assess Montana's progress in transportation safety.

#### Emphasis Areas

Roadway Departure & Intersection Crashes

Impaired Driving Crashes

Occupant Protection

See Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan at

[www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/plans/chsp/current\\_chsp.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/plans/chsp/current_chsp.pdf).

For more information, contact Pam Langve-Davis at 444-7646 or [plangvedavis@mt.gov](mailto:plangvedavis@mt.gov).

# Roadway Departure Media Campaign



this number, MDT is currently under contract with PartnersCreative to develop and implement a media campaign to increase awareness of and reduce the occurrence and severity of roadway departure crashes. Roadway departure crashes are defined by the FHWA as non-intersection crashes that occur after a vehicle crosses an edge line or a center line, or otherwise leaves the traveled way.

MDT has defined roadway departure crashes as non-junction crashes resulting in one of the following crash types: overturning, fixed object, head-on or sideswipe-opposite direction crashes. These crashes can be caused by a multitude of reasons including speeding, impaired driving, distracted driving, passing maneuvers, texting, or roadway conditions.

The overall goal of the project is to educate the public about the consequences of roadway departure crashes in an effort to reduce injuries and death on Montana's roadways. The primary focus of this media campaign is to change drivers' behavior to minimize the number and severity of roadway departure crashes.

The campaign includes outdoor and geo-fencing advertising during Montana summer events such as fairs, rodeos, and festivals. An expanded campaign is slated for the summer of 2016 that will include other media together with the Myth Crashers video, plus similar videos to those used for occupant protection and impaired driving prevention found at [www.Plan2Live.mt.gov](http://www.Plan2Live.mt.gov).

For more information, contact Roy Peterson at 444-9252 or [roy.peterson@mt.gov](mailto:roy.peterson@mt.gov).

Roadway departure crashes account for approximately 60 percent of fatal crashes in Montana. To help reduce

# Paving The Way For Collaboration: Impaired Driving Leadership Summit

Impaired driving is one of the most serious safety issues facing Montana. In the last ten years, impaired drivers have killed and seriously injured thousands of people. Many public agencies contribute scarce resources to mitigate impaired driving, including substantial investments by MDT. Only recently, strides have been made to reduce impaired driving through prevention, intervention, legislation, enforcement, and education. While progress is being made, there is no multifaceted impaired driving executive leadership team in Montana.

On August 5 and 6, in collaboration with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, MDT hosted a two-day Impaired Driving Leadership Summit. MDT Director Michael Tooley, the Governor's Representative for Highway Safety, along with Montana Attorney General Tim Fox, kicked off the summit by emphasizing the importance of collaboration to reach Vision Zero.

The meeting brought together a leadership team that has commitment, motivation, and resources to eliminate impaired driving fatalities and serious injuries. Those on the leadership team represent Transportation, Judicial Branch, Corrections, Highway Patrol, Justice, Revenue, county attorneys, sheriffs, police officers, Public Instruction, county DUI Task Forces, Health and Human Services, and Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

These leaders shared information about their individual organization's responsibilities and programs that reduce impaired driving and identified barriers. Preliminary steps were taken to develop an executive leadership team in Montana. MDT continues to pave the way for this leadership team to leverage resources and share knowledge about impaired driving problems and solutions. Thanks to all agencies involved for the dedication and commitment to saving lives and moving toward Vision Zero.

For more information, contact Kevin Dusko at 444-7411 or [kedusko@mt.gov](mailto:kedusko@mt.gov).

# Non-Metropolitan Local Official Participation Process

Local officials are encouraged to review MDT's non-metropolitan local official participation process guidelines and submit comments or proposed modifications to the MDT Planning Division. The process for coordinating and cooperating with non-metropolitan local officials on transportation planning and programming issues is not only good business, but also a product of multiple federal and state statutes and intergovernmental agreements. This process occurs at both the statewide and local level for all areas outside of Missoula, Billings, Great Falls metropolitan areas and includes:

- Ongoing implementation of *TranPlan 21*, MDT's overall policy plan providing goals and direction for the state's transportation programs.
- Biennium public and stakeholder surveys on the state of transportation in Montana and MDT's public involvement activities. Stakeholder groups include bicycle/pedestrian, economic development, environmental, tribal planners, cities and towns (mayors), counties (county commissioners), intermodal freight, passenger transportation, and state/federal government groups.

- MDT support of small urban area plans and coordinating committees.
- Discussions with local officials on the annual Statewide Transportation Improvement Program development process.
- Coordination between MDT and local governments for review of major developments to protect the safety and capacity of state and local roadway systems.
- Direct involvement in the selection or nomination of federally funded projects using Surface Transportation Program funds for Secondary and Urban roadways.
- Many other issue-specific public involvement processes that provide opportunities for consultation and cooperation with non-metropolitan local officials.

MDT will continue to provide early and continuing public involvement opportunities throughout the planning and programming process as described in the *Non-Metropolitan Local Official Participation Process* guidelines. Local officials are encouraged to review the process guidelines located on MDT's website at [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/non-metro-local-official-participation.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/non-metro-local-official-participation.pdf) and submit comments or proposed modifications by December 4, 2015.

# 2016 Highway Safety Plan Be Aware—

## Wildlife on the Roads

MDT's State Highway Traffic Safety Section (SHTSS) is dedicated to reducing the number and severity of traffic crashes, injuries, and fatalities on Montana's highways. The primary areas of focus are occupant protection (seatbelts and child safety seats) and impaired driving prevention.

SHTSS submits an annual Highway Safety Plan (HSP) to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) for the upcoming fiscal year. The plan includes traffic safety projects using evidence-based strategies for increasing seat belt and child safety seat use, and reducing impaired driving. For federal fiscal year 2016, MDT requested approximately \$3 million in NHTSA funding. Beginning October 1, 2015, funds will be dispersed to successful applicants and include some of the following:

- Safe on All Roads (SOAR) – Native American traffic safety effort for reducing injuries and fatalities on Montana's reservations.
- Buckle Up Montana – Coalitions that focus on increasing seat belt use in their communities.
- State, local, and tribal law enforcement – Programs aimed at enforcing seat belt and impaired driving laws.
- Selective Traffic Enforcement Program – Provides funding for state, local, and tribal law enforcement agencies to conduct extra patrols enforcing traffic safety issues near high risk events.
- DUI Courts – A specific court system dedicated to changing the behavior of alcohol/drug dependent offenders.
- Emergency Medical Services – Assists DPHHS in training emergency responders to improve patient outcome and overall survival of those injured in traffic crashes.

Other fundable areas include motorcycle safety, traffic records data collection and dissemination, speed reduction, and rollover crash prevention.

Annual applications for this funding are due to MDT by March 1. For more information, visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/grants/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/visionzero/grants/). The HSP can be reviewed at [www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/safety\\_plan.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/safety_plan.pdf).

For more information, contact Janet Kenny at 444-7417 or [jakenny@mt.gov](mailto:jakenny@mt.gov).

Fall is a beautiful time of the year in Montana, but it is also when drivers face additional challenges. With the breeding season approaching for deer and other wildlife, drivers should expect increased wildlife activity on or near roadways. With that in mind, MDT reminds motorists to use extra caution and stay alert when driving this fall to avoid animal-vehicle collisions and offers the following tips:

**Be extra cautious at dawn and dusk**—Be especially attentive in early morning and evening. Many animals, especially deer, are most active during these times, which overlap prime commuting times. Avoid driving on cruise control during these times, and drive at a lower speed. Using high beams when there is no oncoming traffic will help you spot animals sooner.

**Always wear a seatbelt**—The chances of vehicle occupants getting injured when hitting an animal are much higher without seat belts properly buckled. Also, never drive impaired, distracted, or drowsy.

**See one? Look for another**—Deer and other wildlife rarely travel alone, so if there is one, there are likely to be more. Slow down and watch for other wildlife to appear.

**Scan the road ahead**—Continually look across the front of the road for signs of animals and movement. Slow down when approaching deer or other wildlife standing near roadsides. They have a tendency to bolt, possibly onto the roadway. Use emergency flashers to warn oncoming drivers after spotting deer near a roadway.

**Don't swerve**—Use brakes if an impact is imminent. Don't swerve. Swerving away from animals can lead to head-on collisions, impacts with objects on the side of the road, or rolling the vehicle.

**If you hit an animal**—Pull over onto the road shoulder, turn on emergency flashers, and watch for traffic before exiting the vehicle. Do not try to remove an animal from the roadway unless it is safe to do so and it is dead; an injured animal is dangerous. For help and to report a collision, call the city police, county sheriff, or the Montana Highway Patrol at (855) 647-3777, depending on where the crash occurs.

## Safety First as Children Head Back to School

**International Walk to School Day is October 7! Check with your local school for activities.**

As children head back to school, it is important to keep in mind that walking, bicycling, and motor vehicle traffic will be picking up. Adults and children need to be extra vigilant to ensure everyone arrives safely. If driving to school, make sure everyone is buckled up. Most crashes happen close to home and even a minor crash can cause major injuries. On a short drive to school, everyone needs to be properly restrained in a seat belt or child safety seat. Drivers also need to watch for children. This time of year the glare from the sun peaking over the horizon can make it very hard to see a person walking or bicycling.

Children need to be extra cautious in the morning and evening around traffic. *SafeKids Worldwide* offers these safety reminders:

- Talk to your children about how to be safe while walking. It's always best to walk on sidewalks or paths and cross at street

corners using traffic signals and crosswalks.

- Teach children at an early age to put down electronic devices and look left, right, and left again when crossing the street.
- Children under 10 should cross the street with an adult. Every child is different, but developmentally, it can be hard for children to judge speed and distance of cars until age 10.
- Remind children to make eye contact with drivers before crossing the street and watch for cars that are turning or backing up.
- When driving, be especially alert in residential neighborhoods and school zones. Watch for bicyclists, walkers, and runners who may be distracted or step into the street unexpectedly. See more at: [www.safekids.org/walkingsafelytips#sthash.2PCyvb1W.dpuf](http://www.safekids.org/walkingsafelytips#sthash.2PCyvb1W.dpuf).



# MS4 Update— Moving Forward



Discharges of pollutants in storm water from some of MDT's roadways and facilities are subject to the requirements of the Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) Program. Currently, regulated Small MS4 areas include Billings, Missoula, Great Falls, Butte, Helena, Kalispell, Bozeman, Yellowstone County, Missoula County, Cascade County, Malmstrom Air

Force Base, University of Montana-Missoula, and Montana State University-Bozeman. DEQ is the permitting authority for the Small MS4 Program. MDT is authorized as a permittee under the General Permit for Storm Water Discharge Associated with Small MS4s.

MDT recently applied for an individual permit under the Small MS4 Program. The permit will apply to only MDT's specific needs and responsibilities across these regulated areas throughout the state. MDT's regulated Small MS4 Areas include, but are not limited to road systems, maintenance shops, salt storage areas, and vehicle refueling stations that are connected to another regulated Small MS4.

The permit will allow MDT to focus MS4 efforts on the storm water quality from road systems and facilities, and the permit will allow statewide consistency in MDT's storm water management program. In the past, MDT had seven separate MS4 authorizations across the state that presented challenges to administering the program consistently and efficiently. An individual permit will cover the MDT storm sewer systems in all seven regulated Small MS4 Areas.

DEQ is currently drafting the individual permit and MDT will coordinate with DEQ throughout the process. After the draft permit is public noticed and the final permit issued, MDT will work on revising the department's Storm Water Management Plan to meet the permit requirements.

MDT is committed to properly managing storm water to maintain the high quality of Montana's waterways. Roadway users have a high degree of control over the quality of storm water that is collected by properly maintaining vehicles to prevent leaks and drips, limiting use of lawn chemicals, and appropriately disposing of trash and used oils. Garbage and other pollutants in the storm drains and roadside ditches may end up in Montana's streams and lakes.

For more information about storm water and MDT's MS4 Program, go to [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stormwater/](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/stormwater/) or contact Doug Lieb at 444-0825 or [dlieb@mt.gov](mailto:dlieb@mt.gov).

## Update Newsline contact information to:

Sandy Waddell, MDT Planning Division  
Box 201001, Helena, MT 59620  
e-mail [swaddell@mt.gov](mailto:swaddell@mt.gov) or phone 444-7614

Save on paper and postage; receive the Newsline electronically by forwarding e-mail addresses.

# New Research Projects

During the May Research Review Committee meeting, eight new projects were approved to move forward to technical panels for further development. The technical panel for each project determines the need for research. If the need for research is confirmed, the technical panel develops a scope of work and follows the project through the conduct of research and implementation. The 2015 projects include the following:

- **Ride Specification for Bridges**  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/const/ride\\_bridges.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/const/ride_bridges.shtml)
- **Effective Production Rate Estimation and Monitoring of Controlling Activities Using Daily Work Report Data**  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/const/production\\_rates.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/const/production_rates.shtml)
- **Development of Best Practices for Micropile Foundation Design and Construction in Montana Transportation Infrastructure**  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/geotech/micropile\\_foundation.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/geotech/micropile_foundation.shtml)
- **Guidelines for Chemically Stabilizing Problematic Soils**  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/geotech/chemical\\_stablize.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/geotech/chemical_stablize.shtml)
- **Regional Regression Equations Based on Channel-Width Characteristics to Estimate Peak-Flow Frequencies at Ungaged Sites Using Data Through Water Year 2011**  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/hyd/peak\\_flow.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/hyd/peak_flow.shtml)
- **Alkali-Silica Reactivity (ASR) in Montana**  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/mat/asr\\_in\\_montana.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/mat/asr_in_montana.shtml)
- **A Systematic Safety Planning Tool for Local Roads in Montana**  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/traffic/safety\\_planning\\_tool.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/traffic/safety_planning_tool.shtml)
- **Identifying Disparities in Definitions of Heavy Trucks**  
[www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/mcs/heavy-trucks.shtml](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/mcs/heavy-trucks.shtml)

## New Pooled Fund Studies

### State Responses to Energy Sector Developments

This project will provide a mechanism to share information related to energy sector development. New and expanding developments in oil, natural gas, coal, wind, biofuels, and solar are occurring in numerous states. Hydraulic fracturing (fracking) for crude oil and natural gas is expanding in many states. Extracting sand used in the fracking process is also underway, and shipments of crude oil by rail and barges is increasing. Supply chains serving energy installations cross state borders. While states, counties, and communities are realizing economic benefits from these activities, the impacts from energy development on transportation systems are immediate and extensive. Rural roads and bridges are especially vulnerable to increased volumes of trucks, but additional demands are also being placed on rail, port, and aviation networks. State departments of transportation and other agencies are responding in various ways to increased truck traffic, infrastructure deterioration, and safety concerns. The project will identify needed research that may be funded in future years of the TPF through the National Cooperative Highway Research Program or by other sources.

### Traffic Control Device (TCD) Consortium

The purpose of this project is to assemble a consortium of regional, state, local, appropriate organizations, and FHWA representatives to:

- (1) establish a systematic procedure to select, test, and evaluate approaches to novel TCD concepts as well as incorporate results into the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD); (2) select novel TCD approaches to test and evaluate; (3) determine methods of evaluation for novel TCD approaches; (4) initiate and monitor projects intended to address evaluation of the novel TCDs; (5) disseminate

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# The Jefferson Canyon Highway

By Jon Axline, MDT Historian

The Roaring Twenties was kind of a mixed bag for the Montana State Highway Commission. On the plus side, the federal government enacted the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1921, which had a profound impact on Montana. The legislation established limits on the mileage of roads in each state upon which federal money could be spent to accelerate the development of a national interstate highway system. To fund the system, the federal government provided the bulk of the money, which had to be matched by the states on a percentage basis. The states raised the matching funds either through bonding (which Montana did not do) or by gasoline and license taxes. Federal allocations to the states were based on population and the amount of public lands within their borders. What Montana lacked in population, it made up for in public lands. Montana could potentially secure enormous amounts of federal funds if it raised the needed matching money.

But, that's not what happened. While the State Legislature enacted a gasoline tax in 1921, most of the money raised went directly to the counties instead of the Montana Highway Commission. The commission got only a small percentage of the tax revenue.

Between 1923 and 1925 the Montana legislature took increasingly more of the commission's share and gave it to counties. It got so bad by 1925 that Montana had to return federal money because it could not raise the necessary match. Montana was the only state to return federal funds. The lack of money nearly ended the road program in Montana. It was not before Montana reputedly had the worst roads in the United States.

Help was on the way, however. In 1925, local Good Roads organizations placed an initiative on the November 1926 ballot that established a gasoline tax of three cents per gallon with all the money going to the highway commission. The commission, in turn, would create a trust fund to be used to match federal allocations to the state. The counties would no longer be the driving force behind highway improvements; it would now be in the hands of the highway commission. Montana voters overwhelmingly passed the Good Roads Bill in 1926, which was a turning point in the history of the road construction in Montana.

Shortly after the passage of the Good Roads Bill, the highway commissioners began plans to improve U.S. Highway 10 between Three Forks and Whitehall. In February 1927, the highway department's engineers and the commissioners discussed a plan proposed by Lewis and Clark Caverns owner Dan Morrison to reroute the highway through the Jefferson Canyon, thereby abandoning the old road that ran between Cardwell and Willow Creek (today's Secondary 359). The new route was a more direct connection between Three Forks and Whitehall and also provided better access to the caverns for tourists. The highway commission initially decided to improve the route through Jefferson Island, Antelope Creek, Sappington, and Willow Creek as the better one because it was cheaper to build and avoided right-of-way conflicts with the Northern Pacific Railway.

The commission's decision was not a popular one with area businessmen and tourism promoters. Beginning in June 1927, telegrams and delegations of people advocating the Jefferson Canyon route occupied good portions of the commissioners' monthly meetings. The Missoula Chamber of Commerce and the Joint County Affairs Committee of Gallatin County both promoted the proposed new highway. Delegations from Whitehall, Bozeman, and Three Forks appeared regularly at the meetings. They all argued that the proposed route through the canyon would "make Lewis and Clark Cavern directly accessible to persons traveling on the main highway and will be more free of snow in the winter time." The most vocal supporter of the Jefferson Canyon proposal first appeared at the highway commission's December 1927 meeting. Dan Lahood owned a small wayside store on the original U.S. 10 route, but had recently purchased property at the head of the canyon and planned to build a hotel and restaurant there once the new route was constructed. Despite the mostly popular support

for the new alignment (only the Madison County commissioners protested it), the highway commissioners stuck to their argument in favor of the original route. The commissioners did, however, promise to survey both routes before making a final decision.

The debate between the proposed routes persisted into 1928 with the highway commissioners receiving petitions and hearing delegations from advocates of both roads. In May 1928, the commissioners made a final decision based on public comments and the economic benefits of both alignments – they settled on the Jefferson Canyon route. Two months later, in July 1928, the commission awarded contracts to Leo Lawler of Butte and Montgomery & Son of Chinook

to build the road, which they completed by 1930. The total project price was just under \$121,000.

The new Jefferson Canyon highway represented a milestone in the highway department's history. A modern paved highway, it highlighted the canyon's spectacular scenery, shortened the distance between Three Forks and Whitehall, and provided direct access to Lewis and Clark Caverns. It was designed specifically to promote tourism in southwestern Montana. Dan LaHood built his hotel and restaurant on the new U.S. 10 alignment and prospered there until his death in 1957. Although Interstate 90 bypassed the canyon in 1966, the Jefferson Canyon highway (now Montana Highway 2) still functions in its original capacity in regard to the caverns and is one of the state's most scenic roadways.



*Jefferson Canyon highway represented a milestone in the highway department's history.*

**New Research Projects** continued from page 6 results; and 6) assist MUTCD incorporation and implementation of results.

For more information on these research projects, contact Kris Christensen at 444-6125 or [krchristensen@mt.gov](mailto:krchristensen@mt.gov) or Sue Sillick at [ssillick@mt.gov](mailto:ssillick@mt.gov) or 444-7693.

MDT's mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality, and sensitivity to the environment.

*Newsline is a quarterly publication of the Rail, Transit, and Planning Division, Montana Department of Transportation.*



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### **MDT Wants Your Comments**

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit [www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans\\_comm/proposed\\_proj.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf), or call 1-800-714-7296. You can mail comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to [mdtnewprojects@mt.gov](mailto:mdtnewprojects@mt.gov).

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5100 copies of this public document were published at an estimated cost of \$0.46 per copy for a total of \$2,362 which includes \$576 for printing and \$1,786 for distribution.